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of the
PAXTON BOYS
1763-'64.

From the "Presbyterian Quarterly Review," April, 1860.

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Printed by J. W. Foster, Boston, 1863.

ARTICLE V.

THE INSURRECTION OF THE PAXTON BOYS.*

It was during the Indian war of 1763-4, that the curious and interesting affair of "the Paxton Boys" occurred. We present an Article on this subject, not only for its specific Pennsylvanian and Presbyterian interest, but because it furnishes the occasion for some peculiar sketches of character. We may remark, that while no country affords more remarkable specimens of idiosyncrasy of races, continuing persistently for generations, than Pennsylvania, in no country, perhaps, has there been less effort to preserve these traits in history and literature.†

Whatever stress we may lay upon the influence of circumstance and culture, it is yet true that we make small progress in the knowledge of human nature, unless we take large account of *race*. We have in Amer-

* This paper was read before the Pennsylvania Historical Society, on Monday evening, April 2, 1860.

† The sources of this Article are Mr. Parkman's History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac; The Colonial Records and Archives of Pennsylvania, prepared by Samuel Hazard, Esq., under authority of the Legislature of Pennsylvania; Mr. Rupp's Histories of Lancaster and York counties, and Mr. Day's Historical Collections of Pennsylvania. We ought also to mention the letters of Mr. Redmund Conyngham, published at Lancaster, the substance of which Mr. Parkman and others have extracted. The history of the latter gentleman is very valuable, and we desire to acknowledge here fully our obligations to it. Mr. Hazard has some pamphlets on the subject which he obligingly offered for our use. There are also about twenty pamphlets in the Philadelphia Library relating to this matter. They are on both sides of the controversy. Besides all these, we have carefully sought information from a variety of sources. To some of them reference is made on subsequent pages.

ica, face to face, representatives of the three sons of Noah—the white Japhethian, the black son of Ham, the red descendant of Shem. What earthly power can make them alike?

The white races in Pennsylvania are remarkably unmixed. They retain their original character beyond those of almost any State in our Union. Omitting any consideration of the comparatively few Swedes, Dutch, Welsh, and men of other nationalities, there are four distinctly marked races.

In Philadelphia, and the eastern counties, are the descendants of the English people, who came with William Penn, or who followed him at different intervals. Settled wherever the soil is rich, and the climate kindly, particularly in the broad valley which begins at Easton on the Delaware, and sweeps in a grand circle to the Susquehanna, and beyond it, and in Lancaster and York counties, are to be found our German population, who are especially of the Lutheran and Reformed, and a comparatively few of the Moravian faith, a people that emphatically mind their own business, and make, with industry that never flags, continual accessions to the wealth of the State. In the northern tier of counties lies the overflow of New York and New England, a people bearing the characteristics which forever re-appear where that remarkable race find a foothold.

But it is with the fourth of these races that we are more immediately concerned. A very remarkable country is Scotland, and wonderful, considering its size, the men it has produced, and the influence it has exerted upon mankind. It is not the Celtic race of which we speak, the Highlanders, of whom Scott has made heroes and Macaulay wild beasts—the truth no doubt lying between them. These are not the Scottishmen of his-

tory, but a comparatively alien race, which has been slowly and reluctantly subdued to civilization. Without losing ourselves in the mists of antiquity, we may say with certainty, that, if not the very first, the Celts were the first people known to history, who, coming from the original seats of the human race, settled in Britain. They are still there in the shape of the Welsh, a part of the Irish, and of the inhabitants of Cornwall, and the Scottish Highlanders.

The races that succeeded the Celts in Scotland were mainly the Norman and Saxon, with an infusion, also, of the Danes who remained in the North of England after their invasion. There was, of course, a mixture of the old Celts with these races, but the Celts, as such, remained in the mass distinct from the Scottish people, as did the Welsh in England from the English. Macaulay, who will not be accused of any undue partiality for the land he has so remorselessly vilified, yet says: "The population of Scotland, with the exception of the Celtic tribes, which were thinly scattered over the Hebrides, and over the mountainous parts of the northern shires, was of the same blood with the population of England, and spoke a tongue which did not differ from the purest English, more than the dialects of Somersetshire and Lancashire differed from each other. In Ireland, on the contrary, the population, with the exception of the small English colony near the coast, was Celtic, and still kept the Celtic speech and manners." We cannot, therefore, understand Scotland without discharging from our mind, at once and forever, the idea that its type is that of the Highland Celts. The Lowlands of Scotland, separated by an imaginary line from England, were settled by the same people, who are called by the Highlanders, Southrons or Sassenach.

Yet it would be a grave error to suppose that the

Celts were always a savage race, a mere rude mass of ignorance. Originally of Japhethian or Indo-European origin, as is now clearly established by comparative philology, there break out from the British Celtic history some of the most curious and beautiful traditions that the world can furnish. That there is some foundation for each of them is undeniable, and they indicate a culture and character that leave us eager to find out more than history can tell us.

The first class of these traditions has seized upon the fancy of one of the finest poets of the age, if not now the very foremost, Alfred Tennyson. We allude, of course, to the legends connected with King Arthur and the knights of the round table. Some of the critics of the destructive school have denied the very existence of Arthur, but it is generally admitted now that there was a prince of that name, of which proof especially is found in the frequent mention of him by the Welsh bards. The date assigned him is about the year 500. He is said to have been mortally wounded in the battle of Camlan, in Cornwall, in 542. Conveyed by sea to Glastonbury, he there died. Tradition preserved the place of his interment within the abbey, as we are told by Giraldus Cambrensis, who was present, according to his own account, when the grave was opened by command of Henry II., about 1150, and saw the bones and sword of the monarch, and a leaden cross let into his tombstone, with the inscription, in rude Roman letters: "Here lies buried the famous King Arthur, in the island Avalonia." "A sort of chronicle was composed in the Welsh or Armorican language, which, under the title of the History of the Kings of Britain, was translated into Latin by Geoffrey of Monmouth, about 1150. The Welsh critics consider the materials of the work to have

been an older history, written by St. Talian, Bishop of St. Asaph, in the seventh century.”*

The authors to whom the oldest Welsh poems are attributed are Aneurin, who is supposed to have lived from the year 500 to 550, and Taliesin, Llywarch, the Aged, and Myrddin or Merlin, who were a few years later. The Welsh popular tales existing in manuscript were called *Mabinogeon*. The manuscripts were contained in the Bodleian Library and elsewhere. For a long time, though Southey and Scott exerted themselves to accomplish it, there was no adequate translation, until, at length, Lady Charlotte Guest, an English lady, married to a gentleman of property in Wales, brought out an edition in four royal octavo volumes, containing the Welsh originals, the translations and ample illustrations from contemporary and affiliated literature. Full and interesting extracts from these are to be found in Bulfinch's *Age of Chivalry*.

The special interest of the *Mabinogeon* lies in this, that while it is an undoubted original, it affords us the transition to the legends of Arthur. The range of the former in all respects is lower, but they are none the less manifestly of the same family. The stories of the Sangrael, of Lancelot, of Sir Galahad, of Arthur himself, are wonderful for their beauty, their religion, and high chivalry. Their tone is like that of the Fairy Queen. Strange gleams, too, come to us of old Lear, of the Welsh bards and heroes, of the capacity of the people for poetry and religion of a peculiar character, which seems to perpetuate itself in Cornwall, as in the celebrated ballad:

And shall Trelawney die?
Then thirty thousand Cornish men
Will know the reason why!

* Bulfinch's *Age of Chivalry*.

The second of these traditions attaches itself to the poems of Ossian. It is not necessary to revive the discussion in regard to their authenticity. Here, as elsewhere, truth lies in the medium between extremes. If Macpherson had been capable of inventing these poems, his name should surely have been written high upon the roll of poets. That he embellished them, giving them a modern polish and character, can hardly be denied. The truth no doubt is, that he found fragments of great power and beauty handed down by tradition, and sung by the few remaining bards of the Highlands, and that, adding much of his own, he presented them to the world in the shape in which we now have them. To our thinking, they are grand and beautiful. More than this. In their melancholy grandeur, in the very hue and tone of their imagery, there is internal evidence that they are the wail of a perishing people—a people of mountains and streams, of mists and storms, of moaning winds and tempestuous waves. “But I saw Annot Lyle,” says Allan M’Aulay, in the Legend of Montrose, “even when my hand was on the hilt of my dagger. She touched her clairsach to a song of the children of the Mist, which she had learned when her dwelling was amongst us. The woods in which we had dwelt pleasantly, rustled their green leaves in the song, and our streams were there with the sound of all their waters. My hand forsook the dagger; the fountains of my eyes were opened, and the hour of revenge passed away.” This beautiful language expresses both the sadness and the truth to nature of the poems of Ossian. As the *Mabinogion* is the connecting link to the legends of Arthur, so the latter connect us with Ossian. Arthur’s court is the Ossianic times Christianized.

There is a third class of traditions of the ancient British race, which is still more close to the matter in hand.

Few things in history are at once more certain, more obscure, and more interesting, than the glimpses of the ancient Culdee people. From various authorities we glean what is known on this subject.*

How early the Culdees planted Christianity in Scotland is not known with absolute certainty. No respectable Church historian places it later than the sixth century, and Schöhl declares that its flourishing period was in the second half of that century. It is said that the Church at Whiterne existed in the year 400, and the probabilities are, that the Scottish Church is still older than this.

It shows how much earlier this Celtic Church is than is commonly supposed, and how entirely distinct it was from Romanism, that while the Roman monk Augustine did not visit England until 596, Pelagius, *who was a Welshman*, went to Rome in the year 400. Celestius, either Scottish or Irish, was a student at Rome when Pelagius arrived there, and embraced and disseminated his opinions. Both of these were men of eminent talents and learning, they visited Sicily, Africa, Egypt, Constantinople, and the East, and created a great excitement in the learned and polished Church of the most cultivated parts of the world. Yet men esteem the legends of Arthur entirely fabulous, not because they are merely traditional, but because they indicate a higher degree of cultivation than we consider possible to have existed in Britain in the year 500. There is surely a delusion somewhere, for the facts in regard to Pelagius and Celestius are as certain as anything in history. The refutation of Pelagius by the great Au-

* Herzog's Encyc. "Columba" and "Culdees." Hase's Hist. of the Christian Church. Guericke's Church Hist. Murdock's Mosheim. Dr. Adamson in Presb. Quart. Rev., No. XX., Art. Scotland.

gustine, is as well known as Calvin's Institutes. The proper name of Pelagius was *Morgan*, which means "Of the sea." In accordance with a custom, which lasted to the Reformation and even later, he turned it into Greek. So Melanchthon's name was *Schwartzerd*, *black earth*. So Ecolampadius, *house-light*, &c.

The world-famous Columba lived and died in the sixth century, beyond a doubt. He founded an extensive Culdee establishment on the island variously called Hii, Icolmkill and Iona, one of the Hebrides, off the south-western extremity of the island of Mull and belonging to the county of Argyle. "Its ruined cathedral or abbey, on its east side, is 160 feet in length by 60 feet in greatest breadth, and like most of its other edifices, is of a date long subsequent to the introduction of Romanism, though some scattered relics are supposed to be of a previous era. St. Oran's chapel is in the Saxon style; St. Mary's and other parts are of a later architecture." This was a seat of learning and primitive piety, and from it, as a centre, went forth missionary colonies far and wide. St. Gall carried Christianity *from Britain*, in 650, into Eastern France and Switzerland, and St. Killian, both being Culdees, about 700, into Germany, on the borders of the river Main. When the monk Augustine arrived in England from Rome in 596, England had already been mainly converted to Christianity by the Culdees. The supremacy of Rome, while acknowledged in England, but slightly affected Scotland for many centuries. "Neither the soldiers of Bannockburn, nor their leader, nor their chaplain called the Abbot of Inchaffray, ought to be considered as truly Popish." In Wickliffe's time, the Culdee establishment at Whiterne was still standing, and in the West of Scotland men eagerly embraced his opinions as being in fact, their own opinions, viz., Culdee. They were

called "The Lollards of Kyle"—Kyle being a district of Scotland forming the middle part of the county of Ayr. The moment the Reformation was announced under Knox, the whole people of Scotland embraced it at once and forever.

This history, thus briefly sketched, will serve to answer the questions which most men have asked at one time or another: Why did Scotland embrace the Reformation so eagerly? Whence its peculiar Presbyterian form there? Why was Episcopacy so fiercely rejected? and why was Presbyterianism held with such extraordinary pertinacity? The answer is, that Romanism never really prevailed in Scotland among the mass of the people. The old Culdee religion never died out. Christianity in Scotland was an independent development from the original, primitive, apostolic stock. The Culdee religion, from the second, third, or fourth century, when it was originally planted, down to the time of Knox, was a religion of their own. Popery was forced, for a time, on an unwilling people, and eagerly, fiercely thrown off so soon as the signal was given from Geneva.

We have traced the ancient British race in Scotland, and in doing so, have in part, overrun our subject. We have now, we trust, attained a vantage ground in the view we have taken of that kind of Celtic people, which became an element in the Scottishmen of history. Let us touch briefly upon the other elements of that remarkable nation.

The nobles and gentry were, in great part, Norman. "The Normans," says Macaulay, "were then the foremost race of Christendom. Their valor and ferocity had made them conspicuous among the rovers, whom Scandinavia had sent forth to ravage Western Europe. In Normandy they founded a mighty state, which gradually extended its influence over the neighboring

principalities of Brittany and Maine. That chivalrous spirit which has exercised so powerful an influence on the politics, morals and manners of all the European nations, was found in the highest exaltation among the Norman nobles. These nobles were distinguished by their graceful bearing and insinuating address. They were distinguished also by their skill in negotiation, and by a natural eloquence, which they assiduously cultivated. It was the boast of one of their historians, that the Norman gentlemen were orators from the cradle. Every country, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Dead Sea, witnessed the prodigies of their discipline and valour."

The incredulity with which some of our readers may receive this statement, that Norman influences were powerful in Scotland, will, perhaps, vanish, when we call up some well-known facts, which, however, have never, perhaps, before been placed in their present light before their minds. It will hardly be denied that there was scarcely ever a people more influenced by their great nobles and leaders, than the Scots. This is manifest upon every page of their history. It is not only true of the highland clans, but almost equally of the lowlands. The masses are always grouped about some nobleman or gentleman. To take a single salient point of Scottish history: John Baliol, who disputed the crown with Bruce, was a Norman noble, and died at his Castle of Gaillard, in Normandy. His son, Edward Baliol, was called over from Normandy "by the dispossessed Anglo-Norman barons, to head them in a daring excursion into Scotland to recover their Scottish estates." This raid is quite famous. They were met by a band of Norman nobles and gentlemen, for it was this class who then fought with each other, and presently with England for Scotland. The Bruces were

Norman. Baliol, Bruce, and Hastings, all claimed the crown through the Princess of Norway and David, Earl of Huntingdon. Sir William Wallace was Norman. His ancestors came from Bergen, in Norway, thence to Normandy. One of his lineage went to the Holy Land with Cœur de Lion. The truth is, that the nobles and gentry of Scotland were mainly Celtic in the Highlands, and Norman in the Lowlands. Some of these nobles, indeed, both highland and lowland, came from Norway direct to Scotland, but the major part seem to have come from Normandy, in the train of William the Conqueror and his successors. The claim of Edward the First to decide the question of the crown of Scotland between Baliol and Bruce, as their suzerain, thus becomes more intelligible. They were Norman barons, and he claimed Scotland as a ffeoff held by them from the Norman kings of England.

As the Danes settled especially in the North of England, they must have influenced Scotland to a considerable extent. The traces of this, however, do not seem very clear. The Danes were of the same Scandinavian stock as the Normans, though possessing a special character which is obviously of a less refined type.

The Saxons are, of course, the basis of the Scottish as of the English people. The difference between them cannot be fully accounted for by difference in origin, or a different degree of intermixture of the elements from which they each originated. We must take account of the difference in soil, climate and religion. The Scot struggles with an unkindly soil, a cold and moist climate; he is formed by nature to endurance, activity, and self-help. While the substantial and practical Saxon character belongs to both, in the Scot it carries with it a more active energy.

The persecution of the Scottish Covenanters is one

of the darkest pages of human history. The descendants of Covenanters have generally spoken with hearty execration of the manner in which Sir Walter Scott has misrepresented their forefathers. The caricature is indeed grievous, and the attempt to elevate into a noble gentleman, the Claverhouse who perpetrated deeds of cruelty with his own hand, from which his wildest soldiers shrunk appalled, one of the most extraordinary examples of tampering with the truth of history, which the world has afforded. But let us not be too hard upon the memory of the Wizard of the North. He loved all Scottishmen; he did justice to some of the traits of the Cameronians; above all, his genius has made their heroism and their sufferings as household words wherever civilization exists. While incapable of understanding the grandest and deepest motives which impelled the actions of these men; while, therefore, failing to comprehend the very essence of Scotland; while knowing not where lay "the hidings of its power," and looking fixedly upon that which was to him, with all his genius, in great part, a mystery, as some wondrous Hellenic Pagan poet might be supposed to have looked at the primitive Christians, he yet poured over and around the Presbyterians of Scotland, a glory of poetry and romance, which have softened and elevated them to every eye. How the old castle of Norham lives and glows before us, as we open the magic pages of Marmion!

Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone;
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.

It is thus that Scott has done good service to the Covenanters' religion; he represents it, indeed, as a vast ruin, rather than a grand building; but as the sunset softens and glorifies Norham, so is that faith transfigured by the glory of genius; it stands in solitary magnificence like Karnak and Luxor beneath the Egyptian sky, and as easily might Christendom go to the Eternal City, and not walk thoughtfully within the mighty remnants of the Coliseum, as men of any shade of belief attempt to be ignorant of the sufferings and the heroism of Scotland's martyrs.

The term *Scotch-Irish*, comes from the accidental circumstance, that a large body of Scotsmen took refuge from persecution, and emigrated, for other reasons, from Scotland to the North of Ireland. The salient point for secular history, of their residence there, is their heroic defence of Derry, "that great siege," as even Macaulay calls it, "the most memorable in the annals of the British isles. Five generations have passed away, and still the wall of Londonderry is to the Protestants of Ulster what the trophy of Marathon was to the Athenians." Derry alone had saved Ireland to the Protestant faith, and to constitutional liberty.

In the times of the persecution a body of Presbyterians, including the three celebrated ministers Livingston, Blair and Hamilton, had embarked in the *Eagle Wing*, intending to settle in New England. But the vessel met with adverse winds and strong currents, and they returned. The time had not yet come. The Presbyterians were among the latest of the settlers who constitute any large portion of America.

The causes that produced their principal immigration to this country, are not entirely clear. But, in general, it may be said that they had met with very many difficulties in Ireland, partly political, partly religious, and

glowing accounts began to come to them of a country where they might be free in every sense, and which afforded in other respects full scope for enterprise. The principal stream was to Pennsylvania, through Philadelphia. The others, less powerful by far, were by Charleston, S. C., and Londonderry, N. H. The great central current poured itself into the eastern and middle counties of Pennsylvania, followed especially the great Cumberland Valley into Maryland and Virginia, where it met the Carolina stream. There originated the first Declaration of Independence of Britain, the famous Mecklenburg document. From thence the stream of emigration passed into Kentucky and Tennessee. Another powerful body went into Western Pennsylvania, and settling at the head of the Ohio, became famous both in civil and ecclesiastical history. .

If there be a more beautiful spot on earth than that where the men of Paxton settled, we have never seen it. From its source in Otsego Lake, where the great American novelist has described it in language that will never cease to be read; along by its lovely windings, where the Chemung intersects the North Branch, whose beauty has been embalmed by one of our most graceful poets; by the Valley of Wyoming, which lives forever in the imagination of Campbell, but which is fairer even than the semi-tropical fancy of which he was enamored; on by the bold scenery of the meeting of its waters at Northumberland, to its broad glory, celebrated in the New Pastoral, and its magnificent union with the Chesapeake, every mile of the Susquehanna is beautiful. Other rivers have their points of loveliness or of grandeur, the Susquehanna has every form of beauty or sublimity that belongs to rivers. We have seen them all: Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri. There is nothing like the Sus-

quehanna on this continent. Its peculiar character depends upon its origin in the New York meadows, its passage through the magnificent Pennsylvania highlands, and the richness of the valleys that lie between the mountains. Every where its course is deflected; it begins a wooded lake; it winds a limpid brook by meadows and over silver pebbles; it makes its way through mountains; it loiters, restingly, by their base; it sweeps in broad courses by the valleys. Its vast width, in its mad Spring freshets, when swollen by the melted snows, it rushes from the hills with irresistible force, sometimes causing frightful inundations, leaves, with its falls, island after island in its mid channel, of the richest green, and most surpassing beauty; while those passages through the mountains afford points of scenery far finer than any one would believe them to be from any description, if he has not seen them.

The Susquehanna makes the grandest of these passages, just below the mouth of the Juniata. Its course there is several miles long, before it entirely disengages itself from the rapids, called Hunter's Falls, which are the remains of the rocky barrier which once resisted its way. Entirely at liberty, it pours its stream, a mile wide, along a channel some fifty or sixty feet beneath its eastern bank. About seven miles below the mountains, at a point where they look blue in the distance, a sheltering wall from the northern blasts, flows in a little stream which the Indians called Pexetang, Paixtang, or Paxton. This mountain range is the northern boundary of the great valley, which, underlaid with blue limestone, covered originally with the richest and noblest forest-growth, and including within it the garden of all the Atlantic slope, extends from Easton on the Delaware, by Reading, Lebanon and Lancaster, by Harrisburg, York and

Carlisle, by Chambersburg, Hagerstown and Winchester, until it loses itself in the North Carolina hills. The point of greatest beauty in all that valley, is the spot where it is cloven by the Susquehanna.

A hundred and forty years ago, an enterprising young man, from Yorkshire, in England, by descent, probably, one of those Scandinavians who, under the great Canute, held possession of the North of England, and gave its main character to it, made his way to Philadelphia. He married here a lady who came over with a well known Yorkshire family of this city. Impelled by the same enterprising spirit that brought him from the old world, and using the inevitable eye that was characteristic of him, he went to the banks of the Susquehanna. He settled for a brief period at a point above Columbia, where the village of Bainbridge now stands, a place much frequented by the Conoy or Gawanese Indians. But he was not satisfied with this location. Exploring upwards along the eastern bank of the Susquehanna, he advanced until, instead of the Conewaga hills at his back and on the opposite side of the river, he found the entrance opposite to him of that most beautiful valley, already described, with two fine streams flowing into the river about five miles apart, and on the eastern side an elevated plateau unsurpassed in loveliness in the wide world, with the little Paxton flowing at the base of an elevated slope or ridge of land. Here he settled, and the ferry across the river to the entrance of the Cumberland Valley, was called after him. His son, the first white child born west of the Conewaga hills, subsequently laid out a town on the spot, and with singular forethought set apart six acres on a noble hill which rises on the north-west, which he conveyed to the State for public purposes. The capitol of Pennsylvania is now built upon it, and the city of Harrisburg bears his name.

Not many English people followed John Harris. Nearly all clustered around Philadelphia. But the Germans and Scotch-Irish coming over in great numbers, and not agreeing very well together, the Penns induced the Germans to settle in the first belt of counties beyond the English,—Berks, Lebanon, Lancaster, York,—and persuaded the Scotch-Irish to settle beyond them, on the frontier. This was the general arrangement, though, of course, there was some intermixture, particularly in Lancaster and York counties. The attention of the Scotch-Irish was thus directed to what is now Dauphin, Cumberland and Franklin counties, with parts of Lancaster and York, and the Juniata region beyond. The passion for hills and valleys, which they learned in Scotland, was amply gratified in Pennsylvania, in a far more fertile land.

Around the English John Harris, therefore, gathered a Scotch-Irish population, almost exclusively. As early as 1736, about fifteen years after the settlement of Mr. Harris, we find a memorial from the congregations of Derry and Paxton to the Synod of Philadelphia; the name Derry, which belonged to a church nine miles below Harrisburg, being, no doubt, a reminiscence of the glorious siege. The Paxton Church long preceded the town of Harrisburg. It stands two miles east of the city, on the sloping ridge we have described. For about a hundred and thirty years a congregation has gathered there to worship God; and in its beautiful grave-yard lies buried the founder of Harrisburg, the son of the first settler, with many of the noblest and best of the early inhabitants. It is the Westminster Abbey of the capital.

The first minister was John Elder, who preached the Gospel there for sixty years. He was a remarkable character. He bore the commission of colonel in those

early troublous times, and performed its duties well. He was one of the true-blue Covenanter sort, like his fellow Scotch-Irishman, General Jackson, always willing to "take the responsibility." His name becomes famous in the raid of the Paxton Boys.

When John Harris came to the bank above the famous mulberry tree, where he was so nearly burnt alive, beneath whose trunk he reposes, and around which the city has at last begun to adorn a park, there was, of course, no white man, woman or child, save himself and his heroic wife—for heroic she was, as many traditions tell—in all that region, nor for many hundred miles westward. His first child was born in 1726. But he was surrounded by Indian settlements.

We have striven hard in America to invest the Indian character with romance. Our success has been but indifferent. There is a perpetual contradiction in these savages. When we repeat over the rich, flowing and sonorous names which they have bequeathed to our rivers, and nurse carefully the few fine traits that can be gathered of Logan, Tamenund, and Tecumseh, we are almost tempted to give a loose rein to fancy, and expatiate upon warriors roaming in freedom by the clear Susquehanna, and maidens mirroring their long tresses in the blue Juniata. But those who have come in any degree of close contact with the actual Indian, especially those who have striven to benefit him, have been greatly discouraged. Whatever beautiful theories of improvement may have been built up by fanciful philanthropists, the practical fact is, that the difficulty of elevating the Indian tribes lies in a peculiarity of race. Far be it from us to deny that, as individuals, they may be made good men. This were to contradict the very essence of Christianity itself. We admit that there is some encouragement in regard to the South-Western

tribes, and it is no doubt our duty to labour faithfully to the end to do them all good. But, as to the race, it is a work of undying benevolence rather than of hope.

The Indian has a dislike, well-nigh unconquerable, to all labor; he can with difficulty be confined within limits; he wanders over the wilderness with a passion for freedom, and an impatience of all regularity and control. He rarely attaches himself to the white race like the negro; he retires before it deeper and deeper into the wilderness. He is usually, in his wild state, not generous, but savage, treacherous, and cruel, and, except where Christianity really penetrates to his heart, he learns ordinarily the vices of civilization, without its virtues. His method of making war is never open and manly. He skulks in ravines, behind rocks and trees; he creeps out in the night and sets fire to houses and barns; he shoots down, from behind a fence, the ploughman in his furrow; he scalps the woman at the spring, and the children by the road-side, with their little hands full of berries. He lounges about, idle and dirty, and forces the women of his tribe to do all the work. He is proud as Lucifer, and yet will beg like the lazaroni. This picture may not please the reader as would one of Mountain Eagle chiefs and Laughing Water maidens; we can only say that it is true. Nobleness of character is the rare exception in the American Indian—not the rule.

Our Pennsylvania Indians, unfortunately, are, in most respects, the least interesting of all. From the advent of the white man on our soil they were a broken and mixed race. From amongst the confusion on this subject—a confusion which springs not only from imperfect information, but from the tangled nature of the subject-matter itself—there arises one tolerably correct classification, which seems to be sanctioned by Gallatin,

Schoolcraft, Bancroft, Parkman, Morgan, Cooper, and all who have looked into the matter. Leaving out of view the extreme Southern and South-Western tribes, and excluding scattered fragments, the Indians east of the Mississippi appear to have belonged to two families usually called the Iroquois and Algonquin. The language of these two families is said to have characteristic differences.

The Iroquois, Mr. Parkman says, called themselves *Hodénosaunee*. Colden says they called themselves *Ongwehonwe*, "the men surpassing all others." They are designated by various names, among which *Mingo* has been made familiar by Cooper, and *The Five Nations*—subsequently *Six*—is the best known. The traces of these are clear enough in the State of New York. The names of the five nations were Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas, with whom the Tuscaroras were united in 1713. Yet, notwithstanding the space occupied by this Confederacy in history, the most accurate estimates do not make the entire number of their warriors so numerous as four thousand men.

Of the Pennsylvanian Indians, two tribes, the Eries who lived along the southern shores of our beautiful lake, and the Andastes, who lived along the Allegheny and Upper Ohio, are said to have been Iroquois. They were both exterminated by their brethren in the seventeenth century. Parkman thinks that the Iroquois contained "the best type of the Indian character;" and President Harrison said that the Wyandots, who are stated to have belonged to this stock, "of all the Indians with whom he was conversant, alone held it disgraceful to turn from the face of an enemy when the fortunes of the fight were adverse."

The *Algonquins* were a race much more extensively

diffused than the Iroquois. The New England Indians, including King Philip among the rest, the tribes to whom Powhatan and Pocahontas in Virginia belonged, and our Delawares and Susquehannas, were all Algonquins. The Indians with whom our founder made his treaty at Shackamaxon, called themselves *Lenni Lenape*, or *Original Men*, and they always declared that they were the parent stem from which the other Algonquin tribes sprang. "At this time they were," to use the words of the historian of Pontiac's war, "in a state of degrading vassalage, victims to the domineering power of the Five Nations; who, that they might drain to the dregs the cup of humiliation, had forced them to assume the name of *Women*, and forego the use of arms." The same author states, however, that in subsequent times, when driven to the north-west, and beyond the reach of the Five Nations, they regained their courage. Mixed with the Lenape were fragmentary bands of Shawnees, who are always making their appearance suddenly and unexpectedly in Indian history. It must be mentioned, in justice to the Algonquins, that Metacom, Tecumseh, and Pontiac, were of their blood. But any notions which may be gathered from such names, to apply to our Pennsylvania Indians, will be found delusive. The Indian who made the deepest impression for honor and goodness in Pennsylvania, was undoubtedly, Logan. Recollections of him are preserved in many of our Pennsylvania families, and one of our pioneers, rising to a pitch of affectionate recollection, said, "Logan was the best man he ever knew, white or red." Yet even Logan, as if to show how doomed the race are, came to a sad end. When his family were murdered, he seemed to lose heart and hope, and by ways too often exemplified in his race, he sank away miserably to imbecility and death.

In endeavoring to put in a clear light the relation of the Indians and the settlers of Pennsylvania, we must ask our readers to lay aside the poetry and romance in which the former have been embalmed, and the prejudice with which the latter have been begrimed. We shall have to make our appeal to that plain, wholesome quality, called common sense. Tried at its tribunal, with justice poising its equal scales, we may find reason to modify the credulity of fancy.

Following the chronological order, we will speak first of the position of the Friends towards the Indians, and then of the Conspiracy of Pontiac, out of which grew the Insurrection of the Paxton Boys.

Though it is mentioned in the histories and memoirs relating to the time, it does not appear to be generally known that the peaceful relations of the Friends with the Indians, was the result, not so much—as is alleged by romantic Frenchmen and members of Peace Societies—of a sublime devotion to principle, as of policy and peculiar circumstances. The truth is, that any other policy, with William Penn's principles, would have been stark madness. It would have been to aggravate savages, when the Quakers could not fight them; it would have been to invite plunder and murder, and then to have thrown open the warehouse, and stretched out the neck to receive the results of their own folly. The Friends have always been a race too wise in their generation for any such insanity. Besides, the Delawares were, as already stated, the mere vassals of the Five Nations. Without permission they could neither make war nor peace, and the Iroquois chiefs, when the Delawares attempted any independent warlike action, treated them with the extremity of contempt. But the proprietaries of Pennsylvania had taken care to secure the friendship of the Five Nations. When the

Indians in the Forks of Delaware had been dispossessed of their lands by the *walking purchase*, which, so far as they were concerned, was a manifest fraud, and refused to remove, the Iroquois were sent for, and Canasatego amongst other palatable remarks told the Delawares: "How came you to take upon you to sell land at all? We conquered you; we made women of you; you know you are women, and can no more sell land than women. Go to Wyoming or Shamokin. Don't deliberate, but take this belt of wampum, and go at once." And they were obliged to go *instantly*. William Penn, in fact, bought Pennsylvania three times; once from the King of England, once from the Iroquois, and once from the Delawares. We do not intend to detract from the great merit of Penn; we only desire that the subject should be clearly understood. He and his followers were the warm friends of the Indian; it became the tradition of the Quakers; and they carried it, as we shall see, to the extremity, as it has been well called, of "benevolent fanaticism." Human nature is always in danger of constrained action, and we ought ever to beware when we find attachment to another race degrading into hatred of our own; a lesson not, perhaps, entirely obsolete in our own times.

Mr. William Parker Foulke has written an excellent paper, which is published as part of the Transactions of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, on the Indians of Lancaster county. This contains the most accurate information on this subject that we have been able to find, either from tradition or in print. The author has carefully sifted the statements that have been made, and has probably reached the truth as nearly as it can ever be ascertained, unless some other sources of information should be opened. We give his results in a few words.

The celebrated John Smith, of Virginia, as is well known, undertook an exploration, quite thorough for that time, of the Chesapeake Bay, and made a map of his discoveries. He says, that at two days' journey north from the mouth of the river, lived a tribe of Indians, whom he calls the Susquehannocks; that they mustered six hundred armed warriors, and had a palisaded fort. These Indians lived on the river at some period from 1608 down to about 1680, when they were conquered by the Five Nations. A settlement was undoubtedly planted by the conquerors at Conestoga, where several treaties were made. About 1698, some Shawnees settled upon Pequea Creek, remaining there for a quarter of a century at least, when they wandered off westward. By the middle of the eighteenth century they were all gone.

About 1700, some Gawanese came from the Potomac, and were allowed to settle at Conoy Creek, near the present village of Bainbridge. Their "name is on the waters" of the creek to this day. They wandered off westward, after remaining thirty years. Some Nanticokes, of Maryland, also settled at Conestoga.* It will thus be seen that the miserable remnant left at Conestoga in 1763, in all probability, was a mixture of, one knows not how many tribes, Iroquois and Algonquin.

The Delawares were crowded to the Susquehanna and beyond. By the middle of the century, a part of them, with the Shawnees, were in the Valley of the Allegheny, and a part on the Susquehanna. They were already beginning to be exasperated and ripening for that which followed. As early as 1755, an attack was made upon John Harris' command, at the mouth of Penn's Creek.†

* Paper of W. P. Foulke, Esq., in Collections of Penn. His. Soc.

† Colonial Records.

It was in the year 1762, now nearly one hundred years ago, that "a scheme was matured, greater in extent, deeper and more comprehensive in design, than any one, before or since, conceived or executed by a North American Indian. It was determined to attack all the English in America on the same day,"* and, in short, to drive them into the Atlantic Ocean. This is the conspiracy of Pontiac. He was principal chief of the Ottowas. They, with the Ojibwas and Pottawattamies, were in some sort united under him. We need not say that he was a very extraordinary man. He was now about fifty years old. Mr. Parkman thinks it clear that he counted upon French assistance for the thorough conquest of the English. At all events, we cannot but be interested in the stupendous plans which he framed. Possibly he thought that once rid of the English, he might be better able to take care of the French—the old idea of *divide and conquer*. There were involved in this plot, "with a few unimportant exceptions, the whole Algonquin stock, to whom were added the Wyandots, the Senecas, and several tribes of the lower Mississippi. The Senecas were the only members of the Iroquois confederacy who joined in the league, the rest being kept quiet by the influence of Sir William Johnson." The treaty of Paris was signed in February, 1763, but it came too late to prevent the outbreak. It burst in May.

Fort Sandusky was taken, followed by the loss of Forts St. Joseph and Ouanaton. Fort Presque Isle made a gallant defence, but was obliged to yield. Forts Le Bœuf and Venango followed. In the latter, the gallant commander, Lt. Gordon, was tortured over a slow fire for several successive nights, until he expired. The next act in this drama was a fearful massacre at

* Parkman.

Michillimackinac, followed by a horrible cannibal feast. Fort Pitt was attacked, but was nobly defended by Capt. Ecuyer, who held it until relieved by Col. Bouquet, one of the ablest and bravest men in the British army. Forts Ligonier, Bedford, and Augusta, at Sunbury, were threatened, but not taken.

Then followed all the horrors of an Indian war on the frontiers of Pennsylvania. We cannot shock our readers with the full details, and yet it is only by the accumulation of these that a proper view can be had of this case. A few of them, therefore, are indispensable. Cumberland county, and the part of Lancaster which now lies in Dauphin, were the frontiers. "Upon them descended," says Parkman, "the storm of Indian war with appalling fury—a fury unparalleled through all past and succeeding years. It would be a task alike useless and revolting to explore, through all its details, this horrible monotony of blood and havoc." The Pennsylvania Gazette of that date states that "the Indians set fire to houses, barns, corn, hay, and, in short, to everything that was combustible, so that the whole country seemed to be in one general blaze. Not a single individual was left beyond Carlisle. On both sides of the Susquehanna, for five miles, the woods are filled with poor families and their cattle, who make fires, and live like the savages." An express stated that "he saw, lying on the road, a woman who had just been scalped, and was then in the agonies of death, with her brains hanging over her skull." "In a solitary place, deep within the settled limits of Pennsylvania, stood a small school-house. A man chancing to pass by, was struck by the unwonted silence, and pushing open the door, he looked within. In the centre lay the master, scalped and lifeless, with a Bible clasped in his hand, while around the room were strewn the bodies of his

pupils, nine in number, miserably mangled, though one of them still retained a spark of life." This boy, strange to say, survived, though scalped like the rest. A letter from Paxton, in relation to the massacre at Wyoming, says, that "a woman was roasted, and had two hinges in her hands, supposed to be put in red hot, and several of the men had awls thrust into their eyes, and spears, arrows and pitchforks sticking in their bodies." Col. Croghan stated that two thousand persons had been killed or carried off by the Indians, and some thousands driven to beggary and distress. "A boy ploughing at Swatara was shot by two Indians." An Indian spy watched the congregation at Paxton Church with a view to bringing in a body of Indians upon them, but finding every man armed, he withdrew. "The reapers of Lancaster county, in 1763, took their guns and ammunition into the harvest fields to defend themselves from the Indians." To use the language of Lazarus Stewart: "The bloody barbarians had exercised on our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, and children and relatives, the most unnatural and leisurely tortures; butchered others in their beds, at their meals, or in some unguarded hour. Our people recalled to their minds, sights of horror, scenes of slaughter; seeing scalps clothed with gore! mangled limbs! women ripped up! the heart and the bowels still palpitating with life, and smoking on the ground! They saw savages swilling the blood of their victims, and imbibing a more courageous fury from the draught. They reasoned thus: These are not men; they are not beasts of prey; they are something worse; they are infernal furies in human shape."

We insert here a copy of statements of the outrages of the Indians on the Pennsylvania frontier, and the feelings of the settlers at periods a few years previous

to 1763. Mr. Harris writes to the Governor: "William Chesney is come home, who saw a little boy in our fort who was scalped last week. Our own Indians are strongly suspected for several reasons. First, By their deserting our army, all except about six men, by the latest accounts, and by English goods or arms found on an Indian killed last week by one Williams, which goods or arms were delivered lately out of our fort to Indians then there." Mr. Harris writes again: "On our return from Penn's Creek, we were attacked by about 20 or 30 Indians, received their fire, and about fifteen of our men and myself took to trees and attacked the villains, killed four of them on the spot, and lost but three men, retreating about half a mile through woods and crossing the Susquehanna, one of whom was shot from off a horse riding behind myself through the river. My horse before was wounded, and failing in the river, I was obliged to quit him and swim part of the way. *The Indians here, I hope your honor will be pleased to cause to be removed to some place, as I don't like their company. I have this day cut holes in my house, and am determined to hold out to the last extremity.*" The Governor—Robert Hunter Morris—says, in reply, that he can give the frontiersmen no aid whatever, but commends their zeal, and urges them to act with caution and spirit.

There is also a petition signed by seventeen men, addressed to the same Governor, in which they say: "We, the subscribers, went out and buried the dead, whom we found most barbarously murdered and scalped. We found but thirteen, which were men and elderly women, and one child of two weeks old, the rest, being young women and children, we suppose to be carried away prisoners. The house (where we suppose they finished the murder) we found burnt up, and the man of it,

named Jacob King, a Swisser, lying just by it; he lay on his back, barbarously burned, and two tomahawks sticking in his forehead."*

In a contemporary pamphlet, now in the Philadelphia Library, it is stated, among other barbarities, that "bodies of a numerous family were found in Sherman's Valley, half devoured by wolves and swine." "A mother, in Shippensburg, lay stretched on a bed, dreadfully mangled, with a stake driven into her body, with her new-born infant scalped and placed under her head for a pillow."†

Some distance below Paxton,‡ in the manor of Conestoga, there was a miserable remnant of Indians, consisting of twenty persons. It was commonly believed, on the border, that the Indians who were murdering every unprotected man, woman and child, plundering and burning every thing they could lay hands upon, were concealed by these Conestogas and that they acted as their spies.

In the middle of December, a scout came to the house of Matthew Smith, at Paxton—whose name appears frequently as a courageous ranger—and reported that an Indian, well known as a depredator, had been traced to Conestoga. Mr. Smith took five men, and went down

* Colonial Records.

† "Conduct of the Paxton men, in a letter from a Gentleman in one of the back Counties, to a Friend in Philadelphia." Dated St. Patrick's Day, 1764. In Philadelphia Library.

‡ Mr. Parkman must be mistaken in supposing that there was a town at Paxton in 1755. Governor Morris held a council for the Indians there in 1756, and states that there was but one house there—Mr. Harris's. See the *Pennsylvania Archives*. There were, doubtless, settlers scattered through the country from about 1730 onwards. See Mr. Rupp's *History of Lancaster County*. There is a petition of the Paxton and Derry Churches as early as 1736, as stated above, to the Synod of Philadelphia. See the *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 125.

to reconnoitre. He saw, or fancied he saw, armed Indians in the cabins. The next day, December 14th, 1763, about fifty men went to Conestoga, and killed six of the Indians, whom they found there, the man who shot the first Indian, declaring: "He is the one that killed my mother!" The other fourteen Indians were put into the jail at Lancaster for safe-keeping. It was believed that one of these had murdered the relatives of one of the borderers. Some fifty gathered, on the 27th of December, their leader being Lazarus Stewart, who had an excellent character as a brave and active man, dashed into Lancaster at a gallop, broke open the jail door, killed the fourteen Indians, and were gone in ten minutes.

No language can describe the outcry which arose from the Quakers in Philadelphia, or the excitement which swayed to and fro on the frontiers and in the city. The Governor issued two proclamations, offering rewards for the seizure of those who had effected the massacre. Their arrest, however, was impossible, without arresting the whole frontier.

The next step in this remarkable affair arose from the wise precaution which was taken by the government, and which, if it had been taken in the case of the Conestoga Indians, as Mr. Harris and Mr. Elder had recommended, would have prevented the massacre. The Moravian Indians, at Wyalusing, were threatened, and, to the number of a hundred and forty, were removed to Philadelphia. Hearing, however, that the Paxton men were marching on the city, the authorities, in dire alarm sent these Indians to New York, to put them under protection of Sir William Johnson. They arrived at Albany, when Governor Colden of New York refused them admission to the province. The Governor of New Jersey ordered them out of his province. Governor Penn

had entreated General Gage for some regulars, and the General sending one hundred and seventy men, this escort brought the Indians back to Philadelphia, and lodged them in the barracks.

The tragedy now begins to gather elements of the farce. The excitement in Philadelphia was beyond description. The city had hitherto entirely escaped the horrors of partisan warfare. Rumors came that thousands of armed borderers, of ferocious strength and size, marksmen of the most accurate aim, and determined to murder every Quaker, were marching on the city. Towards the end of January, a body of the frontiersmen, in force variously estimated at from five hundred to fifteen hundred men, actually marched. They said that they were going to kill the Indians; what else they meant to do, or not to do, perhaps they did not exactly know. There is no doubt that they were in the humor for some kind of a fight.

Those were not times of rail roads or telegraphs. Their march was leisurely, and the inhabitants, as they moved on, sympathized with them, assisted them, and a number probably joined them.

The city was all alive. Nothing was heard of but preparations for defence. Dr. Franklin organized nine companies, and multitudes volunteered to be formed into companies at a moment's notice. It is pretty clear that the Presbyterians took the matter coolly, and were not much alarmed in view of the advancing columns.

The panic reached its height, when on the fifth of February, 1764, at two o'clock in the morning, the clang of bells and rolling of drums waked every man, woman and child in town. Multitudes gathered before the barracks, among whom were many Quakers, who, not very consistently, were armed with guns. Suddenly "there was a general uproar. 'They are coming! they are

coming! Where? where? Down Second street! down Second street.' Such of the company as had grounded their firelocks, flew to arms, and began to prime; the artillerymen threw themselves into order, and the people ran to get out of the way, for a troop of armed men, on horseback, appeared in reality coming down the street, and one of the artillerymen was just going to apply the fatal match, when a person, perceiving the mistake, clapped his hat upon the touch-hole of the piece. The men proved to be a company of German butchers and porters under the command of Captain Hoffman, coming to aid in the defence." *

About two hundred of the Paxton men crossed the river, and marched to Germantown. According to the Pennsylvania Gazette of the day, this had been the appointed rendezvous, but as all the fords of the Schuylkill, but one, had been guarded, only one division crossed. Matthew Smith was in command of this band. Some of the citizens now ventured out to see them. They found, in the language of a writer of the time, "a set of fellows in blanket-coats, and moccasins, like our Indian traders or back country wagoners, all armed with rifles and tomahawks, and some with pistols stuck in their belts." To their surprise, the Paxton Boys received them with much courtesy.

The governor and council now determined to try negotiation. Against this the Quakers vehemently protested, insisting upon it that the soldiers ought to exterminate such infamous wretches. In the midst of a fresh alarm, in which a Quaker meeting house was filled with armed men—of which the Friends did not hear the last for some time—Dr. Franklin and three others were appointed to go to Germantown. The Paxton men received them with every mark of respect. A compro-

* Quaker letter in Hazard.

mise was agreed upon; the government assured them of a respectful hearing of their grievances, and Matthew Smith and James Gibson were appointed commissioners on the part of the borderers.

Mr. Parkman, in two places of his generally excellent account, intimates that the Paxton Boys received the citizens and ambassadors with courtesy, because of the unexpectedly warlike attitude of Philadelphia. It is not very surprising that a New England man should not understand the Scotch-Irish character. To us the whole affair is clear as noon-day. There is not a solitary sign of flinching from the beginning to the end of it, for to attempt the killing of the Indians in a city where thousands were aroused and opposed to the attempt, would have been mere insanity. There are two elements of the peculiar character of the race from which these men come, that are very curiously developed in this *emeute*. The one is courage, and the other is a strange, amorphous, Gothic-Scandinavian love of the grotesque, that has run in their blood from the first legends of Thor, down to the latest raftsmen on the Susquehanna, and the last boatman on the Ohio. We despair of communicating the impression to any one who has not heard the "inextinguishable laughter" about the iron works and the court-houses of the Juniata. All other mirth is tame compared to the "young earthquake" that breaks loose when the restraint of years yields at some barrier, and the wilder scions of Presbyterianism go off sky-larking into practical jokes and shouting Titanic fun, from the bottom of their capacious souls. Gay people are too constantly frivolous to have much mirthful power *in retentis*; it is the joviality of a serious people that is portentous in its breadth and depth. It is Byron's "fierce and far delight:"

How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder; not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps that call to her aloud.

Any Pennsylvanian who has drunk the waters of the Susquehanna, can see that the march on Philadelphia was half a frolic; and we are particularly surprised that Mr. Parkman did not catch the spirit of it as it appears in two most curiously characteristic incidents, that have been oddly enough preserved. One is, that while the borderers were waiting about Germantown to see how badly they had scared the polished Philadelphians, they, according to the sober and quiet, and we may add, distinguished German, David Rittenhouse, "uttered hideous outcries, in imitation of the war-whoop; knocked down peaceable citizens, and pretended to scalp them; thrust their guns in at windows," &c., &c., though without really hurting any body, or plundering any thing, for they paid honestly for every thing they took. The other incident—in the face of which, Mr. Parkman might as well insinuate want of courage against Leonidas and his three hundred at Thermopylæ, or the six hundred at Alma—is, that thirty of the Paxton Boys, having exhausted Germantown, got upon their horses and rode into the city, "with singular audacity," says our New England historian. Truly! Probably no other race of men on earth would have thought of such a freak. Several of them had openly boasted of the part they had taken in the Conestoga affair, and a large reward had been offered for their apprehension. A thousand men gathered around them, and asked what they wanted. "Oh!" they said, "we want to see the city and the Indians." They insisted that they could point out some

of those who had been in the battle against Col. Bouquet, or otherwise engaged against the whites. So they rode to the barracks, looked at the Indians, and then rode through the city back to Germantown, and so home, leaving Smith and Gibson to finish the remainder of the business.

The re-action at Philadelphia, when it was ascertained that nobody was hurt, and that the Paxton Boys had gone home, broke out into a multitude of pamphlets and squibs. It is very curious to look at the three volumes of them in the Philadelphia Library, and see the excitement and the grotesque fun of the time, embalmed in permanent print. Among other things, there are "The Paxton Boys; a Farce;" "The Paxtoniade;" a heroic doggerel, after the manner of Hudibras; Dialogues between Trueman and Zealot, and between an Irishman and Dutchman; fierce polemic pamphlets on both sides, and one brief one, wherein some good Christian attempts to mediate between the ferocity of Quaker and Presbyterian. Nearly all have one virtue; they are short.

The two commissioners drew up a "Declaration" and "Remonstrance," to the Governor and Assembly. In these papers, Smith and Gibson "speak in behalf of ourselves and his Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, the inhabitants of the frontier counties of Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Berks, and Northampton." It is obvious, therefore, that though Paxton was the heart of this business, that the sympathy was very wide spread. They complain, in the Remonstrance, of the following things :

1. That the representation in the Assembly was unequal. That their five counties had but ten members, while the three counties and city of Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks, elected twenty-six.

2. That those charged with killing the Indians in Lancaster County, were to be tried, not at home, where the facts were known, but in the Eastern counties. They argue that this is contrary to the known privileges of British subjects, and that it would be an *ex post facto* law.

They then go on to complain, at length, that they had not been assisted in defending the country as they should have been; that the Indians were taken care of at the public expense, while the citizens of the frontier had been deprived of every thing by the inroads of Indians; that no steps had been taken to ransom captives; that spies and murderers were protected; that influential persons had more sympathy for Indians than white men, &c., &c.

The Declaration is their own defence of the massacre of Conestoga. They begin by professing to be, to a man, loyal subjects of the King. They state, at length, the unwarrantable favor shown to the Indians; reiterate their opinion that they are spies and murderers; and state, as the great grievance, which showed the *animus* of all the rest, that when, in the preceding summer, Col. Bouquet's forces marched through the Province, almost as a forlorn hope, to defend the frontiers and save Fort Pitt, and when General Amherst, the royal Commander-in-Chief, demanded assistance, provisions, &c., yet that the government of Pennsylvania did not stir hand or foot, did not furnish a man, provisions, or assistance of any kind. Yet that the moment Indians were in distress, they were helped by the authorities and influential men. That every abomination committed by Indians, was excused, and that they were encouraged and protected while cutting the throats of the borderers; and then, when at last, deserted by the government, the frontiersmen had protected themselves,

and after fighting the Indians every other way, had at last cut off the source of their calamities, a price was set upon the heads of those who defended their country, their children, and their firesides. And so they conclude, "God save the King."

The sequel of the affair is very inconsequent. Smith and Gibson went home, and nothing more was done. The Indians, in Philadelphia, after suffering grievously with the small-pox, which carried off a third of their number, returned, about a year after, to their homes at Wyalusing. The only arrest made was that of Lazarus Stewart, who, however, escaped out of jail, perhaps not being very vigilantly guarded, and published a vigorous manifesto, one of the most vehement if not eloquent documents of the period.*

It remains to sum up the evidence in this affair, and to give as impartial an estimate of it as we may.

1. The massacre is not chargeable upon the leading gentlemen at Paxton; upon the Scotch-Irish, or the Presbyterian Church, as a body. Mr. Elder was the pastor of the churches of Paxton and Derry at that time. He was a gentleman of very high standing, greatly trusted by the authorities. He held, and efficiently exercised, as we have stated, the office of colonel of a regiment, raised to protect the frontiers. When he heard of the determination of the rangers to kill the Indians, he rode after them, and used every influence in his power to prevent it. Finding that they were going forward, he put his horse across the road in front of them, and declared that they should not pass except over his dead body. They told him that they should not injure him; but Smith, the leader, levelled his gun at Mr. Elder's horse. Knowing his men, and that the threat was not in vain, he was obliged to desist.

* See Day's Historical Collections of Pennsylvania, where it is printed.

The whole stream of testimony, written and traditionary, represents the Messrs. Harris, father and son, as eminently kind to the Indians, just as far as it was possible to be so. A letter in the Archives, of date Dec. 30, 1754, only corresponds with all the other evidence, by saying: "I'll assure you John Harris' kind usage to the Indians, this fall, has been of much service, and ought to be properly rewarded." Mr. Elder and Mr. Harris, and Mr. Shippen, of Lancaster, urged the removal of the Conestoga Indians. Their presence was declared to be dangerous both to the settlers and to themselves. When the massacre took place, Col. Shippen exculpates both Mr. Elder and Mr. Harris, and Mr. Elder warmly defends Mr. Harris. We quote Mr. Elder's letter to Governor Penn: * "In concert with Mr. Forster, the neighboring magistrate, I hurried off an express with a written message to that party, 'entreating them to desist from such an undertaking, representing to them the unlawfulness and barbarity of such an action, that it's cruel and unchristian in its nature, and would be fatal in its consequences, to themselves and families; that private persons have no right to take the lives of any, under the protection of the Legislature.'"

He then adds: "I know not of one person of judgment or prudence that has been any wise concerned in it, but it has been done by some hot-headed, ill-advised persons, and especially by such, I imagine, as suffered much in their relations by the ravages committed in the late Indian war." Col. Armstrong, also, at Carlisle, in a contemporary letter, published in the Archives, disapproves of the matter in strong terms.

2. The second point which appears clearly, is that the provocation to the massacre was extreme. In ad-

* Archives.

dition to the evidence already produced, the reader will note the following:

Col. Bouquet writes, under date July 9th, 1763: "I am sorry to acquaint you that our forts at Presque Isle, Le Boeuf and Venango are cut off, and the garrisons massacred by the savages, except one officer and seven men, who have escaped from Le Boeuf. Fort Pitt was briskly attacked on the 22d; Fort Ligonier has likewise stood a vigorous attack. If the measures I had the honor to recommend to you are not immediately put into execution, I foresee the ruin of the part of the Province on this side Susquehanna."*

Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the commander in chief of the British forces, writes, in October of the same year, and just before the massacre, to the Governor of Pennsylvania: "I herewith enclose a paragraph of a letter which I received last night from Sir William Johnson, containing some intelligence of the bad intentions of the savages on the frontiers of Pennsylvania, and I acquaint Col. Bouquet thereof, that he may be on his guard; but I cannot help repeating my surprise at the infatuation of the people in your Province, who tamely look on while their brethren are butchered by the savages, when, without doubt, it is in their power, by exerting a proper spirit, not only to protect the settlements, but to punish the Indians that are hardy enough to disturb them."

The enclosure narrates, in an interesting manner, the information received from a Seneca chief, of a council held at Muskingum, by the Ottowas with the Delawares and Shawnees, in which the latter are urged to war against the English, to destroy Forts Pitt and Augusta, and then to march on Philadelphia. The Delawares thanked the Ottowas for looking on them now as *men*,

* Col. Rec., IX. 35.

and declare that they will show by their actions that they were worthy of the confidence reposed in them. The letter is dated, "Johnson Hall, October 6, 1763."*

So deeply concerned was Sir Jeffrey in this, that when he returned to England, shortly after having been relieved by General Gage, he induced the king to issue an order in council to the authorities of Pennsylvania, urging them to defend the frontier. General Gage also writes, December 12, urging that one thousand men, the quota of Pennsylvania, should be expedited.

In September, of the same year, Jonas Seely, a magistrate, writes from Reading: "On the 8th inst., a party of Indians came to the house of John Fincher. They killed him, his wife, and two of his sons; his daughter is missing; one little boy made his escape from the savages, and made his way to Ensign Kern, who pursued them to the house of Nicholas Miller, where he found four children murdered." The next day, Mr. Seely writes: "This moment, as I am sending off the express, certain intelligence came that the house of Frantz Hubler was attacked on Friday evening by the Indians; himself is murdered, his wife and three children carried off, and three of his children scalped alive, two of whom are since dead."†

It will be remembered that this was in the very next county to Lancaster, and that Berks county lay between Conestoga and the residence of the Wyalusing Indians.

A commission was ordered to take evidence in regard to the massacre at Conestoga, and the evidence is published. We extract the following:

"Abraham Newcomer, a Mennonist, by trade a gunsmith, upon his affirmation, declared that several times,

* Col. Rec., IX. 63.

† Col. Rec., IX. 43-4.

within these few years, Bill Soc and Indian John, two of the Conestogue Indians, threatened to scalp him for refusing to mend their tomahawks, and swore they would as soon scalp him as they would a dog. A few days before Bill Soc was killed, he brought a tomahawk to be steeled. He said, 'If you will not, I'll have it mended to your sorrow.'

"Mrs. Thompson, of Lancaster, swore that Bill Soc, in her house, said, 'I tell you, all Lancaster can't catch me. Lancaster is mine, and I will have it yet.'

"Col. Hambright testified, that it was believed at Fort Augusta that Bill Soc and another had killed an old man near there.

"Alexander Stephen testified that an Indian woman told him that the Conestogue Indians had killed an Indian named Jegrea, because he would not join them in destroying the English.

"Anne Mary Le Roy swore that she was taken captive by the Indians, and carried to Kittanning, and that while there, strange Indians visited them; that the French said they were Conestogue Indians, and that, with one exception, they were ready to lift the hatchet when ordered by the French. That Bill Soc's mother told her that he had often been at Kittanning, and that he was good for nothing.*

"Thomas Moore, being sworn on the holy evangelists, before the Chief Burgess of Lancaster, declared, that during his four years' captivity with the Indians, they had frequent intelligence and advice of the motions of the English from the Bethlehem Indians, who came constantly among them, and kept up correspondence with them.

"I have been frequently informed, for many years, by many of their nearest neighbors in the Conestogue

* Col. Rec., IX. 108.

manor, that they were a drunken, debauched, insolent, quarrelsome crew, and that ever since the commencement of the war, they have been a trouble and a terror to all around them." The murderer of Stinton or Stinson is said to have been traced in one of the Indians in the Philadelphia barracks.*

3. It is also clear that the mass of the men on the frontier sustained the Paxton Boys, or rather that the movement included a very large part of the settlers. We are informed that "farmers near the mountain contributed largely to defray the expenses of such as were not able to procure horses," to go to Philadelphia, "and to pay expenses." Benjamin Kendall, a Quaker, states before the Council, that at the sign of the Hat, two miles east of Lancaster, he met Robert Fulton, who told him that "if 1500 men were not enough, they would raise 5000, that if the angel Gabriel were to come down, these men would not desist, that they were of the same blood-ran, blood-thirsty Presbyterians who cut off king Charles' head." Being asked if they intended to kill the Quakers, he said: "God forbid! unless they oppose the attempt to kill the Indians." Add to this, that though a reward of £200 was offered for the ringleaders, none were ever arrested but Lazarus Stewart, and he escaped.

4. It is also plain that the Paxton Boys never considered themselves guilty of murder. They always regarded their movement as war against the Indians; they considered the matter as political—national, and the whole business, including their march on Philadelphia, as a pronunciamiento, not of individuals, but of the people. The affair resembled the hanging of the gamblers by Lynch law at Vicksburg, and the operations of the Vigilance Committee at San Francisco. They

* "Conduct," &c., in Philadelphia Library.

considered that a desperate case required a desperate remedy. This kind of "wild justice" will sometimes break out amongst a free people, and while we are not to justify or encourage such movements, we are, for the truth of history, to distinguish them from murder and individual crime. Mr. Elder plead with the Paxton Boys to convince them that they were wrong in putting the matter on political grounds, and in the manifesto of Gibson and Smith the whole course of reasoning is political. They were appointed commissioners to treat with the government; they speak for five counties; they are protected as ambassadors, they demand political rights.

5. With the exception of the Quakers, and others, who had sat by their quiet firesides in Philadelphia, had no part to bear of the horrors of Indian warfare, and the feelings of most of whom towards Indians were quite peculiar, the contemporary censure of the wisest and best men is very modified.

When Governor Penn wrote to Governor Colden, of New York, for permission to send the Wyalusing Indians to that State, the Governor and Council refuse in such terms as these: "The Indians on the east side of the Susquehanna are the most obnoxious to the people of this Province of any, having done the most mischief. They consist of a number of rogues and thieves, runaways from the other nations, and for that reason, not to be trusted. This government are rather disposed to attack and punish, than to support and protect those whom they still consider as their enemy.*"

Mr. Elder states, that though comparatively few were engaged in the massacre, yet that those who were then about to march on Philadelphia, "have the good wishes of the country in general, and that there are few but

* Col. Rec., IX. 121-2.

what are either one way or other embarked in the affair." As to those who engaged in the massacre, he says: "And yet the men in private life are virtuous and respectable; not cruel, but mild and merciful."

The Rev. Dr. Ewing was one of the most eminent ministers of the Presbyterian Church, or indeed of any Church in America. He was Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in this city, and Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and was so remarkable for mathematical knowledge, that he was more than once employed with Dr. Rittenhouse in running the boundary lines between States. "Perhaps," says Dr. Miller, "our country has never bred a man so deeply, as well as extensively, versed in every branch of knowledge commonly taught in our colleges." On a visit made by him to Europe, he was presented with the freedom of the cities of Glasgow, Montrose, Dundee, and Perth, and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh, of which Dr. Robertson was then the Principal. The opinion of such a man must be of great importance on any subject. Dr. Ewing was intimate with the Harris family, his daughter having married the son of John Harris. He addressed a letter on the subject of the Paxton Boys to President Reed, who was then in England, dated February, 1764, from which we make a few extracts.

After alluding to the massacre as having been done by "some desperate young men who had lost their relatives by these Indians," he adds: "Few, but Quakers, think that the Lancaster Indians have suffered anything but their just deserts. 'Tis not a little surprising to us here, that orders should be sent from the Crown, to apprehend those persons who have cut off that nest of enemies that lived near Lancaster. They (the Indians) never were subjects of his Majesty; were a free,

independent State, retaining all the powers of a free State; sat in all our treaties with the Indians; they entertained the French and Indian spies; gave intelligence to them of the defenceless state of our Province; were frequently with the French and Indians at their forts and towns; supplied them with warlike stores; actually murdered and scalped some of the frontier inhabitants, and even went so far as to put one of their own warriors to death, because he refused to go to war with them against the English. It was no more than going to war with that tribe, as they had done before with others, without a proclamation of war by the Government."

The letter is written under excitement, and some things are unintentionally overstated; but it shows the opinion of one of the ablest and best men in the country.

There is scarcely one of the early ministers of the Presbyterian Church, who has left so strong an impression of learning as Dr. Francis Alison. He was assistant minister of the First Presbyterian Church in this city, and Vice-Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. He was the first Presbyterian minister in America who received, from abroad, the degree of Doctor of Divinity, it having been conferred upon him by the University of Glasgow. At his school, in New London, were educated Charles Thompson, Secretary of the First Congress; Dr. Ewing; Dr. Ramsey, the Historian; Dr. Hugh Williamson, one of the framers of the Constitution of the United States, and Historian of North Carolina; and three of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas M'Kean, George Read, and James Smith. President Stiles said of him, "He is the greatest classical scholar in America, especially in Greek; in Ethics, history, and general reading, he is a great

literary character." Dr. Alison was the founder of the Presbyterian Society for the relief of ministers and their widows, and the first named of its trustees. A vindication of the Paxton Boys appeared in the *London Chronicle*, No. 1223, from that Society. It is in the shape of a letter from Philadelphia, dated August 22, 1764. A reply to it was made by a member of the Society of Friends, in which Dr. Alison and Dr. Ewing are mentioned by name; and there seems every reason to attribute the letter to the former. At all events the publication was authorized by him, by Dr. Ewing, and the leading Presbyterians of the city. We make some extracts from this well-written letter. We would call attention particularly to the fact mentioned here—and to which we have not before alluded, though it is mentioned in other documents of the time—that the Paxton men had marched against the Indians in open fight previous to the Conestoga massacre. We might, too, have alluded to the attack of Col. Armstrong and his men, of the same race and neighborhood, upon the Indians at Kittanning, which has been always considered a gallant exploit. In short, their courage had shown itself in every possible way. The letter states:

"These murders are generally committed by Indians who lived either near or among the Europeans in the time of peace; they know the state of the frontiers, and how to distress them, and steal off without discovery. . . . The very Indians who lived among us, and had done us great mischiefs during the war, sat in the Council with the nations to whom they belonged, and concluded this peace. And even in time of peace, before this war broke out, they told the inhabitants among whom they lived, that they had scalped and carried them into captivity, and would do it again. These frontier inhabitants complained that they are not fairly

represented, or else they had not been such sufferers. Exposed to daily incursions of the Indians, they formed a party of volunteers to go and destroy some Indian towns near our borders, on Susquehanna; accordingly, one hundred and sixteen men marched almost to their towns, and were informed that fifty of those Indians, against whom they had set out, were on their march against the frontiers. They returned and overtook the Indians, and routed them at the Muncey Hill, on Susquehanna. They then proposed to follow their blow, and applied to Colonel Armstrong, who commanded the provincial forces. Two hundred volunteers went out with him, and one hundred and fifty provincials; but the Indians among us gave notice to our enemies, and they escaped; but our people destroyed about three hundred acres of corn, and burnt their dwellings, and returned enraged to find that an Indian town, of about twenty or thirty persons, had now informed their friends, against whom our men had marched, and who were perfidiously playing the same pranks as they did last war; they marched to their town and cut off some of them; others fled to a borough named Lancaster, and there they came and cut them off.

Afterwards some of the very Indians that were beat at the Muncey Hill, and that had their corn destroyed, sued for the same privileges, and were brought to Philadelphia and maintained by the Province. This influenced the resentment of a number of the inhabitants of the frontiers, and about five hundred came down well armed. They complained of grievances and sufferings that would have drawn tears from stones. They were solemnly promised a redress of grievances, if they appointed two of their number to lay them before the Governor and Assembly, and returned in peace to their dwellings. They marched abroad and home, with de-

cency, above one hundred miles, paying every one for what they had on their journey."

To conclude. About five millions of people in America have the blood of these Scotch-Irish people in their veins, and not one of them, man or woman, that is not proud of it, or that would exchange it for any other lineage. This race put forth the first Declaration of Independence in America—the famous Mecklenburg paper. So soon as the news of the battle of Lexington reached them, they marched to the leaguer of Boston. It was, perhaps, the only race of all that settled in the Western world, that never produced one tory. The nearest case to it ever known, was that of a man who was brought before the church session, in Chambersburg, and tried upon this charge, that he was "*suspected of not being sincere in his professions of his attachment to the cause of the Revolution.*" * A majority of the Pennsylvania signers of the Declaration of Independence were of this race.† It was the venerable Dr. Witherspoon who said, during the debate upon the adoption of that paper, on the sacred spot at once so near and so dear to us: "That noble instrument on your table, which secures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning by every pen in this house. He who will not respond to its accents, and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy the name of a freeman. Although these gray hairs must descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hand of the public executioner, than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country!"

* United Pres. Quar. Rev., No. I, p. 48.

† Bancroft himself has said, "The first public voice in America for dissolving all connection with Great Britain, came, not from the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians."

When Washington, after crossing river after river, with his broken army, was asked how far he meant to retreat, he replied, that if he were obliged to cross every river and mountain to the limits of civilization, he would make his last stand with the Scotch-Irishmen of the frontiers, there plant his banner and still fight for freedom. This race has produced four Governors of Pennsylvania, and four Presidents of the United States. It has given to the nation, among scores of lesser luminaries, in oratory, Patrick Henry, Calhoun, M'Duffie; in war, Mercer, Montgomery, Morgan, Knox, Jackson. In invention, one name is enough; it is that of Fulton; in statesmanship it is enough to speak of Madison and Hamilton.

In the Church, their distinguished names cluster in constellations. It is a race that has ever conserved learning. Wherever it goes, the school-house springs up beside the house of God. "Sixty years before the landing of the May Flower, and eighty-two years before the first public school law of Massachusetts was adopted, the first Book of Discipline in the Scottish Church required that 'a school should be established in every parish for the instruction of youth in the principles of religion, grammar, and the Latin tongue.'" In America, before the cabins disappeared from the roadside, and the stumps from the fields, these men founded a log-college at Neshaminy, in Eastern Pennsylvania, where some of the most eminent men of the last century were educated. And when they first of all opened the gates to the Valley of the Mississippi, on a bright summer day, with no meaner canopy over their heads than the blue arch of heaven, under the shade of a sassafras tree, two Scotch-Irish ministers inaugurated Jefferson College by solemn prayer, and the hearing of a Latin recitation.* Half a century latter, another

* United Pres. Quart.

Scotch-Irishman, with two of his ministerial brethren, went out, and kneeling down in the snow, with nothing to separate them from God but the wintry sky, dedicated the ground on which Wabash College now stands to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

It is a race that never shrinks from its responsibilities, and that fears not the face of man. A Scotch-Irishman originated and carried through the Legislature of Pennsylvania, the act of 1780, for the gradual abolition of slavery.* "We esteem it," says Mr. Bryan's preamble to that great law, "a peculiar blessing granted to us, that we are enabled this day to add one more step to universal civilization, by removing, as much as possible, the sorrows of those who have lived in undeserved bondage, and from which, by the authority of the King of Great Britain, no effectual legal relief could be obtained. We conceive that it is our duty, and rejoice that it is in our power to extend a portion of that freedom to others which hath been extended to us." Of the deep religious devotion of this race, and their solemn fear of God, we will not now speak, though it is the crowning excellence of their character, and the source from which all that is great in them, springs. That amidst all this they had their faults, we need not deny. They were somewhat rough, and the gentler and finer elements of civilization came in among them rather by stealth, as the wild flower by their rocky streams was rather tolerated than cultivated. But as our grand Pennsylvania nourishes its pure air and its crystal waters amid its rough gray mountains; as it hides beneath its rude bosom treasures richer than those of Peru and Golconda; so is it in the stern integrity, the vigorous intelligence, the unflinching courage, and the heart-felt piety of its plain and sturdy pioneers, that the rich and fragrant bloom of our finest civilization has its deep and far-reaching roots, and its firm trunk, which has borne unscathed, alike, the fiercest heats and the wildest storms.